h Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

keeps for breeding. Similarly, young male camels are sold for food 231
and only a selected few retained to carry the household tents and 492
baggage.

Mares are never sold, and the male foals, if not killed at birth, are a source of income when sold in the towns bordering on Arabia. (See Chapter XXX.)

The Badawin of the desert has a charm of his own, and if you 672
once make friends with him or do him a kindness, he does not forget. 577
He is above all things a child of nature, and is ruled by a strange pride which he calls his *sharaf* and which he values almost above life itself. Scold a desert man or call him ugly names, and he is ready to knife you; at the very least he will sulk, dig his toes into the ground and do nothing that you wish. On the other hand, if you treat him kindly, invite him to sit down in your tent and take a cup of coffee with you, you have gone half-way to win his friendship and confidence. If you treat him as an equal, and not as a servant, even if he is merely your guide or escort, he will react wonderfully and will rarely take liberties.

He is full of humour too, and will understand a joke and a good 672
story, but you must not make fun of him before his fellow Arabs.

Next to his *sharaf*, the Badawin, and for that matter every true 677
Arab, values his family honour or *'arâk*. This word implies the good name of his womenfolk and more especially of his wife and sister. If his *'arâk* is besmirched nothing short of killing the errant woman will remove it. Respect the Badawin's *sharaf*, speak well always of his *'arâk* and help him to guard both, and all will be well with you in your relations with him.

However poor he is and however lowly his dwelling-place, the 574
Badawin excels as a host, and will slay his last camel or sheep to do honour to his guest. Nor are his womenfolk behindhand in this respect. If an important personage passes by her tent in the absence of her husband, the wife will run out of her tent holding out a frothing bowl of camel's milk or *laben*, as a sign of welcome.

THE BADAWIN'S FAULTS

The desert man has his faults, of course, and by Western standards 600
they are grave.

L Dickson G-5 (1939-47) [illegible] MI I Knoell
Introduction MJH

Sanctity of Women

Chap. VII

If she is pretty, attractive and the daughter of So-and-So, she will 542
easily find a dozen other men ready to marry her. 587

As for her children: she retains the small ones till they reach the 586
age of eight, and then hands them over to their father's care, but they are never far from her, and are allowed to come and see her as often as they like. Nay, if she is a clever girl she will keep on quite friendly terms with her former husband, and call and see his new wife regularly. That is quite common practice.

Where the Bedawin housewife has distinctive rights, is in the 542
management of the tent; she is *um al 'ayāl* (mother of the family) 462
as well as *rafeet al bait*. She holds the honour and good name of her husband in the hollow of her hand. Upon her falls the duty of providing for the guest, of cooking choice and tasty dishes, of turning out good *labn*, and generally bringing the good name of her husband into prominence among his fellow Arabs.

The mistress of the house never sees or mixes with stranger guests, 542
but she knows all that is going on, for only a curtain partition separates 674
the women's from the guest's quarters.

The personal name of the lady of the house is never mentioned by the guest, or even by the host's own friends, she is *Um al 'Ayāl* or *Rafeet al Bait* only. Should a friend wish to ask after a man's wife, he will merely say to the husband, *Kaif hal illi warak?* or *Eshlon um al 'ayāl?* ("How is she who is behind you?" or "How is the mother of the children?"). Unpleasant bandage is taboo.

Even more carefully guarded and shielded are a man's marriageable daughters. They are never seen at all, except by those on very intimate terms.

Jokes about a man's getting married, and so forth, are quite com- 542
mon, and the young Lothario about to get spliced is always the butt 522
of his companions, but never is the woman's name brought into this form of rough chaff. That would be *'ab* (a shameful thing).

The sanctity of a woman and her good name is most immediately 542
apparent in case of war or hostilities between two tribes. 726

She it is who encourages her menfolk to go forth and fight bravely for her and come back triumphant. She it is, if the tribe has to be defeated, who uncovers her face, lets down her hair, and mounts the camel of the tribe wildly to encourage the young and old men to

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

Shaikh Thuwainan abu Sifra of the Mutair, and by Shaikh Khalid al Hithlain of the 'Ajman a few days later.) 173

Shagha married Sultan al Duwish, and became by him the mother of the famous Faisal al Duwish of the Mutair, the conqueror of Madina for the present king. Before her marriage, Shagha is said to have had a dream, in which she gave birth to an iron *mishf al* stick.* On telling her father Haam al Hithlain and her mother, they asked for details of the dream. The girl, frightened, said that as the iron rod in her dream came away from her, it grew a fiery "red hot" colour and started emitting great sparks, which beat on and burnt up the tents of her people the 'Ajman. Her father, knowing something of dreams, comforted her, and said that her firstborn would be a son, and a famous man, and that he would be a thorn in the flesh of the 'Ajman, yet a friend in time of need. 173 787

A year later she married Sultan al Duwish, Shaikh of the Mutair, and gave birth to Faisal al Duwish, than whom no tribal leader in Arabia has been greater or more famous. All his life Faisal, the son of the 'Ajman lady Shagha, spent his time alternately raiding the 'Ajman and making peace with them. The tribe reverenced and admired him because of his mother, and hated him because his father was an enemy and a Mutairi. To the day of his death in 1932 the 'Ajman called him the "iron camel stick" who scourged their tribe, and proved his mother's dream to have been prophetic. 173

Wadha became the mother of Sa'ud al 'Arafa, by 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Faisal bin Turki al Sa'ud (first cousin of His Majesty the present King 'Abdul 'Aziz al Sa'ud). Hence Sa'ud al 'Arafa's preference for his mother's tribe, and the saying that he is the real Shaikh of the 'Ajman. He is the husband to-day of Bin Sa'ud's famous singer Nura, and lives perpetually by the King's side, for owing to his mother's blood the King fears him, and with reason, if we read the history of the Arab.

'AJMAN LIGHTHEARTEDNESS

The following trivial incident is typical of the merry lightheartedness of the 'Ajman. 922

* A *mishf al* is the camel-stick, used by every Bedawin.

L. Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Bedouins M24

Light-hearted Chaff

622 755 Once when my wife, Zahra and I visited Junaifir's tent, I asked to see 'Abdullah's wife, who had cooked our lunch so nicely. We were all taken to the women's portion of 'Abdullah's tent and met Shagha, a pretty comely girl who had had four children, all of whom had died, in spite of her having according to 'Ajman custom eaten a portion of the ear of the last arrival to keep it alive. I knew from others that Shagha was afraid that 'Abdullah intended taking another girl to wife, so I determined to help her.

622 *Abdullah:* When, O Abu Su'ud, are you going to give me the rifle you promised me last year?

Self: When I hear from the lips of your wife that you deserve one.

'Abdullah to Shagha: Speak up, woman, and say that I am the best of husbands, and should have the rifle.

Shagha: He is a good man, O Abu Su'ud, please give him his wish.

Self: I will certainly, and for your eye's sake, but a bird told me he desires the daughter of Muraik (a local beauty), and neither God nor Um Su'ud (my wife) here would agree to this so long as you are living. (A general cheer from the women and roars of laughter from Junaifir, father of 'Abdullah.)

Junaifir: By God, O Abu Su'ud, you speak the truth, though whence you have heard the rumour God alone knows. She shall not be ill-treated, and you may make a condition of giving 'Abdullah the rifle, that he does not divorce our Shagha.

Self: So, 'Abdullah, I have found you out. The rifle shall be yours as soon as you bring me a paper warqa sealed by your seal, saying that you will not marry bint Muraik or put away Shagha. (Much laughter and joy on Shagha's part.)

'Abdullah: Very well, Abu Su'ud, a rifle is worth more than all women put together. The warqa shall be brought you. But don't forget also some cartridges.

NOTE.—The rascally 'Abdullah proceeded to Riyadh in June 1936 and married a young thing there. Shagha has been told she will still be considered *Raiyat al Bait*, or head of the tent. Fortunately 'Abdullah has not yet got his rifle: I don't think he will now.

After this amusing passage Junaifir ups and says, "Ya Abu Su'ud, I have found you the 'Ajman girl, whom we are going to marry you to". "Where?" says I. "Ho, you niswân (Oh, you wenches) bring along my sister the beloved Samha and show her to the Gomul" (Camel). The proffered bride was duly brought along, an old crony of some

h Dickson G-S (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Bedouins MS

eighty summers. "Here she is, here she is," says old Junaifir, "though somewhat old she is a perfect cook, and we keep our best girls for such as you." "La, la" (no, no), "O Junaifir," cries out my wife, rumbling to the joke, "my husband Abu Sa'ud likes *hinu*, not old women. What about hint Murait the lovely one, my husband will surely take her?" (hint Murait was the prospective supplanter of Shaghu, ousted for the promise of the rifle). More roars of laughter from inside and outside the tent, and cries of "That is one for you, O Abu 'Abdulla, well scored Um Sa'ud". The above incident is recounted with apologies to illustrate the cheeriness and joviality of the 'Ajman, all of whom above other Arabs seem to enjoy a joke. 122

Two hours later, the wife, my daughter and I were in the women's quarter of the tent of Hamad bin Midhwar. Hamad was away, but his brother Sa'ud acted as host. Sa'ud's wife was enormously fat, but full of fun. Whilst showing off her daughter Maseira wife of Hamad, she asked if we English liked fat or thin girls; "between and between", said I guardedly. "Then Nura my second daughter is what you must like." Nura is duly produced, Maseira's younger sister, a rather lovely girl. "Now, O Abu Sa'ud," said the fat one, "what about her?" I greatly admired her, to Nura's delight especially, and suggested that she might with advantage leave her husband and come and be my wife. Roars of "Do you hear that, Um Sa'ud?" (Mrs. Dickson). "Abu Sa'ud wants to take my Nura for a second wife, but we shall never allow her to be taken over your head (*'ala ras ik*)." My wife made suitable rejoinder.

ORIGIN OF THE 'AJMAN

Two days later a visit was paid us by Shaikh Salim bin Udhaina's 178
wife and daughter Mezha. Both had been exiles in Mahruth bin Hadhal's tents in the north for close on four years. They had just returned from the Waddiyan with Muhammad ibn Udhaina, who was returning to Ibn Sa'ud to make his peace.

The next day I held a *majlis* and discussed with 'Ajman greybeards the origin of the 'Ajman, and questioned them as to what tribes in Southern Arabia were allied as coming of the same stock. I learnt the following (30th April, 1935).